

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are currently pending in the application. Claims 18-24 have been withdrawn from consideration. New claims 25-27 are presented for consideration.

Claims 10-13, and 15 stand objected to as each depending upon a rejected base claim. Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form so as to be allowable. Claims 11-13 and 15 depend cognately from allowable claim 10.

Claims 1-9, 14, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over JP2708717 (Japan '717) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,176,583, to Schanin et al. (Schanin).

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-9, 14, 16 and 17, and favorable consideration of new claims 25-27 are requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to characterize the step of forming the first belt/belt sleeve component as forming the first belt/belt sleeve component into a continuous shape. Claim 1 is further amended to characterize the step of forming a second belt/belt sleeve component as forming a second belt/belt sleeve component into a continuous shape. Claim 1 is further amended to clarify that the first and second belt/belt sleeve components are joined after forming the second belt/belt sleeve component. The first and second belt/belt sleeve components are joined to each other with the first and second belt/belt sleeve components residing one within the other.

It does not appear that Japan '717 discloses a corresponding second belt/belt sleeve component, consisting of at least a part of a cushion rubber layer and load carrying member, that is separately formed and thereafter attached to the first belt/belt sleeve component. Instead, it appears that all of the components, including the preformed, ribbed compression rubber layer, are serially built up upon a mold and thereafter vulcanized.

The Examiner notes, but does not formally cite, U.S. Patent No. 5,733,399 (Wood) for the disclosure of the application of a radial force to a rubber sleeve in a heated molded die. Wood discloses precisely the problem associated with the prior art that is described on page 3 in the first full paragraph of applicant's specification. That is, in Wood, the tooth elastomer 92 is required to be radially urged into the recesses 14. The tensile cords 88 are likewise required to be moved radially through the substantial distance required to form the teeth, which may adversely affect the properties of the cords 88 and/or their relationship in the completed belts.

It is respectfully submitted that the prior art cited by the Examiner does not teach or suggest the structure recited in claim 1.

Claims 2-9, 14 and 16-18 depend cognately from claim 1 and recite further significant method limitations to further distinguish over the cited art.

New claim 25 characterizes the step of joining the first and second belt/belt sleeve components as maintaining the rate of elongation of the load carrying member in a range that is greater than 0% and less than 3%.

It is believed that a process carried out as in Wood would inherently cause the rate of elongation to be greater than 3%. As noted above, by preforming the ribs/cog teeth before joining the second belt/belt sleeve component, the invention affords the opportunity to avoid adverse elongation of the load carrying member during the step of joining these components.

Claim 26 is similar to originally presented claim 1 and further characterizes the step of forming the first belt/belt sleeve component as occurring against a mold surface on a first mold assembly, with the second belt/belt sleeve component formed likewise against

a second mold assembly. The first and second belt/belt sleeve components are joined to each other with the first and second mold assemblies, one within the other, by radially urging one of the first and second belt/belt sleeve components to against the other of the first and second belt/belt sleeve components.

As noted with respect to claim 1, the prior art does not teach or suggest joining corresponding belt/belt sleeve components that are preformed, particularly through radial movement of one relative to the other.

Claim 27 depends from claim 26 and corresponds to claim 25, which is discussed above.

Reconsideration of the rejection claims 1-9, 14 and 16-18, favorable consideration of new claims 25-27, and allowance of the case are requested.

Should additional fees be required in connection with this matter, please charge Deposit Account No. 23-0785.

Respectfully submitted,

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